

2

Watershed Goals

The list of Gordon Creek watershed planning goals was developed by collecting and distilling input from stakeholders during the first joint meeting with JCC and CWP representatives (see Appendix B). This is particularly important in the Gordon Creek watershed, as understanding stakeholder values and concerns are critical in developing a shared vision for planning within a relatively undisturbed watershed. In addition, goals previously established for the Powhatan and Yarmouth Creek Watershed Plans were reviewed to ascertain if they are applicable to the Gordon Creek watershed. Though each watershed is unique, revisiting these existing goals is an important step in order to continue a consistent county-wide approach to watershed management.

The following three overarching Watershed Goals are consistent with previous watershed plans while reflecting the specific needs of the Gordon Creek Watershed. . The 17 Strategic Actions drafted to help realize these Watershed Goals are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1. *Minimize the further degradation of water quality in Gordon Creek and preserve, restore and maintain the outstanding quality of all streams within the watershed as well as tidal and non-tidal wetlands.*

This is fundamental goal not only for the Gordon Creek watershed, but as previously expressed in the Powhatan Creek and Yarmouth Creek Watershed Plans. The wording has been modified slightly to include all wetlands, not just those on the mainstem of Gordon Creek. This goal addresses the importance of maintaining the recognized biodiversity in the watershed (particularly of the freshwater tidal portion) as well as recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation.

2. *Develop in a manner that is consistent with the protection of living resources in the Gordon Creek watershed: avoid habitat fragmentation and encourage the preservation of riparian and wildlife corridors.*

The wording of this goal has been expanded somewhat from that included in the Yarmouth Creek Watershed Plan to focus on key areas for conservation that will help protect watershed resources and water quality. During the October 2007 stakeholders’ meeting, individuals recommended that the plan both “protect the watershed without reducing development” and “establish 500 foot mainstem buffers” as well as intermittent stream buffers (see Appendix B).



While addressing both these concerns is a difficult task, understanding and respecting wildlife corridors, identifying opportunities for conservation and preservation along riparian corridors and incentivizing these opportunities will assist in achieving this goal and – as recommended by a stakeholder – help “preserve the rural character of the watershed.”

3. *Promote active stewardship among residents, community associations, businesses, and seasonal visitors.*

Engaging existing stakeholders is particularly important for the relatively undeveloped Gordon Creek watershed. With the low density of development, protection of the Gordon Creek watershed is in the hands of a relatively small number of landowners. Their actions will determine the ultimate health of the watershed.